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ABSTRACT

This publication is one in a series of case studies dealing with educational innovation in various western European countries and the United States. This particular report discusses educational innovation in England. Because the British central government is much less involved in educational matters than are many other governments, English educational innovations originate from diverse sources and tend to be very pragmatic in approach. For this reason, the author devotes much of her analysis to examining who the innovators are in English education, what they are trying to change, and where the obstacles to educational change lie. Three examples of recent innovations are described to illustrate different approaches to educational innovation in England. (JG)

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Technical Report

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INNOVATION IN EDUCATION

- ENGLAND -

by

Anne Corbett

EA 007 316

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PREFACE

The following case study is one in a series of five dealing with innovation in education. All the studies are descriptive in nature and, as the work of five different authors writing in their personal capacity, they represent five quite individual syntheses and interpretations of vast amounts of information. Yet the confusion that might be expected from this method does not result. What emerges from these studies is instead a reasonably coherent statement of educational responses to the post-war demands of many more people for more and better education.

Perhaps it is not remarkable that the demands have been exerted so consistently on such a variety of nations, nor that the response to them has for the most part been so quick and positive. The nations examined in this book are remarkably similar in that all have a long and honourable tradition of public education, an industrialised economy and a high standard of living. At first glance it even appears that their solutions to the problems posed by recent educational demands are unusually similar: structural reform, curricular reform, compensatory and/or individualised learning systems - examples of each are easy to find in any setting. Yet a closer reading of the five case studies reveals wide and interesting variations: in priorities, in perceived solutions, in strategies evolved or developed to implement them.

Such variety of course reflects to a large extent differences in 'national climate', that peculiar combination of values, objectives, aims and administrative tradition which, aside from language, makes a nation distinctive. The explication of these differences is thus a hidden theme of the five case studies taken as a whole, and an understanding of this hidden theme is necessary to illuminate the more obvious themes of change and growth.

An explanation of this point can be found by comparing, even superficially, Scandinavian countries such as Norway and Sweden on the one hand and the United States of America on the other. At least from the viewpoint of the outside observer, Norway and Sweden have much in common. Both relatively small in terms of population, they can also claim a remarkably unified social and value structure. Furthermore, their style - if such a generalisation can be made - seems to be to have a clear idea of goals and then to set about methodically reaching them. This process is aided by the existence of strong central governments which are able to plan and to legislate with a reasonably clear assurance that what they propose will be achieved. Thus there exists in Norway the National Council for Innovation in Education whose mandate it is to make reality of reform laws passed by the central Parliament. The Parliament, concerned in recent years with "large questions of the role of schools in Society", and sure enough of its constituency, has concerned itself largely with structural reform and new curricula - on a national scale.

The situation in the United States is quite different, even if the question of relative size of total population is ignored. The American federal government is based on a system of checks and balances so fine that it is often hard to determine either the source of impetus or its ultimate manifestation. The situation is further complicated by the well-protected existence of states' rights - particularly the control of education - and, once the issue of taxation is raised, by municipal and regional claims as well. Perhaps more important, the rich diversity of the American population inevitably means conflicting social and ethnic interests, values, and views of national priorities. The past decade of American life has indeed been one of fast-changing goals and objectives and of massive social upheaval. Much of the upheaval has connected itself to education and made demands accordingly: in the light of this political and social background, it is not surprising that American education responded by producing such a variety of innovations in every area and at every level that the final array can be quite bewildering, whilst at the same time providing a vast reservoir of experience for others.

England and the Federal Republic of Germany likewise provide differences quite distinctly their own. Writing of her own country's approach to recent educational change, the author of the English case study notes

> ".....the English style is distinctive. You can seize on it instantly. There is no acceptance of common objectives, except in the most general sense which inspired the last major education act: the need to widen opportunities and eliminate the poverty both of individual children and of the public provision of education (1). There is no national plan for education, no law which specifies where development is necessary as in some OECD countries. There is almost no theory. The point is characteristically made in a recent major report on education (2): 'We invited the help of a number of distinguished educationists and professors of educational philosophy ... They all confirmed the view that general statements of aims were of limited value and that a pragmatic approach to education was likely to be more fruitful.'"

The reference to "two decades of non-reform" in German education, a phrase coined by Professor S.B. Robinsohn, is slowly becoming eroded, especially during the last two years, which have been marked by fundamental changes in many parts of the school system. With increasing co-operation between the Länder and with the initiatives of the new Ministry for Education and Science, the need for a more systematic approach to educational reform, and especially to educational experimentation, seems more important in Germany today than in many other countries.

Despite these differences in background and style, the five country studies do show one overriding problem in common: the need to change and improve their educational systems. Furthermore, as their experience increases, they all face the reality that effective measures to facilitate the management of educational change are necessary, that innovation and improvement cannot be haphazardly left to chance.

PART I

INTRODUCTION

English education is full of changes. Primary education is being made much freer. Secondary education is being reorganised to break down the old divisions between academic and practical schools for pupils who were supposed to be distinguishable at the age of eleven. Post-school education in universities and local authority colleges is being energetically expanded. Much of the curriculum for students of all ages and all levels of intelligence is being reappraised. Teachers and administrators are facing more urgently than ever before new challenges on what to teach and how, in the light of new knowledge, new appreciation of the way children learn and new demands from society about what children should learn.

The aims of those involved in changing English education are the same as change-makers in countries the world over. Socially they want to widen opportunities. Educationally they want to emphasise learning rather than teaching. And where appropriate they want to update the content of the curriculum.

The English style of change is, however, distinctive. Within the school system, the subject of this report, you can seize on two characteristics. First, innovation (meaning consciously introduced change) comes from many sources. Individual teachers have the freedom - as professionals they are encouraged - not to let the content or method of education ossify. This is a real freedom. Individual local authorities have much scope to organise their schools and may develop strategies for influencing the content of schooling too. But, central government, in contrast with government in many OECD countries, is relatively weak at instituting change and only spasmodically involved. Change may also come through a whole network of interests: universities, teacher-training institutions, professional associations, parents and employers, and indeed through the only compulsory inmates of the education system, the pupils and students.

Secondly, the approach is pragmatic. There is in English education no acceptance of common objectives or priorities, except in the most general sense which inspired the last major education act(1): the need to widen opportunities and to counter the poverty within the system. There is no national plan for education, no law, as in Norway which specifies where development is necessary. There is almost no theory of change. The English approach was summed up in a recent report on education(2). "We invited the help of a number of distinguished

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(1) Education Act 1944. See New Law of Education, sixth ed. George Taylor and John B. Saunders. Butterworths 1965, p.3.

(2) Children and Their Primary Schools (The Plowden report) H.M.S.O. 1967, para. 501.

educationists and professors of educational philosophy .... They all confirmed the view that general statements of aims were of limited value and that a pragmatic approach to education was likely to be more fruitful."

Such a decentralised approach has obvious disadvantages: change is uneven and the reasons for particular successes or failures are often not appreciated. But the immediately obvious solution of more direction and more centralisation has, where it has been tried, been resisted. And, I would argue, rightly. English-style innovation has two great strengths. It is expected to be diverse. And it relies on the active involvement of those in the classroom as much as, or more, than of those in committees. The people who institute change may well be those who have thought it out in the first place.

Educationists, who want to make the process of change less time-consuming and less wasteful of individual effort need -to quote one man who has been intimately involved, Geoffrey Caston(1)-to discover how "to boost professional self-confidence in a pluralistic setting." They should not be concerned merely with producing strategies, models of change and all the stock in trade of the methods men. They need, so an English argument runs, to devise institutions which can support without directing.

In an international context the most interesting aspect of English innovation is thus likely to centre on the experience of two bodies created to stimulate innovation and development, the Schools Council and the National Council for Educational Technology. The Schools Council is concerned with school examinations and curriculum, the National Council works with industry as well as schools. This report looks at some of their school-directed work.

But since they do not monopolise the means of change, even in their areas of special interest, this report also looks at who the innovators are in English education, what they are trying to change and where the obstacles are. Three examples are given to show the current variety. The primary education example shows the most traditional form of innovation: coming from the local education authority and the schools. It also shows a particularly thorough appreciation that change in content needs to be expressed in a change in method. The secondary reorganisation example is the most political and shows the central government at its most active. It is largely organisational. The curriculum development example, shows innovatory strategy at its most developed in English terms.

A final point: one of the other distinguishing features about English educational innovation is the lack of documentation. This is therefore a largely personal report.

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(1) Journal of Curriculum Studies, May 1971.

PART II

STRUCTURES AND STRATEGIES

This part deals with the status and function of the various bodies involved in educational innovation and their relationship.

There are three main points to note: (1) that, historically, change has been rooted in the schools, or at any rate the local education authority, (2) that attempts at centralised initiative have not been successful and tendencies to centralisation have been resisted, (3) that the new strategy is a central servicing operation to assist local initiative.

First, therefore, in this section is the local level: the teaching profession and the local education authorities. The national level follows: the Department of Education and Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (the HMIs) and then the National Council for Educational Technology, and the strategies they use: in-service training and the teachers' centres. Last come those who have had a long standing role in the promotion of ideas: the research bodies, the teacher training institutions (universities and colleges of education) and government advisory committees.

The Local Roots

1. Teachers

The freedom of teachers is part of an English legend. The legend has some substance. Schools are not directed by local or central government as to either what or how they should teach (with the exception that they have to provide religious education).

But freedom of ordinary teachers to decide on organisation and curriculum depends on the head. The head teacher decides how the school should be organised, what books and equipment should be used and what should be the relationship with parents. The head has wide areas of discretion.

The head in turn is subject to a number of restraints: the pressure of exams, competition to get a university place, parental disquiet. The local authority's chief education officer may apply pressure if he feels that a head is being inefficient. But there is little to threaten a head's security: he is almost impossible to sack. Nor does the head expect to feel threatened. There is generally a free and easy relationship between heads, their governors and the authority's advisors.

At its best, the teachers' use of their freedom can be reflected in an astonishing degree of change. A famous and well documented example of a revolution in learning which was entirely school based is the "progressive movement" of the 1920s and 1930s(1). More recently, individual teachers have not only changed the whole content and method of their pupils' education, but have, through books and lecturing, started changes which have gone a long way beyond their own schools(2).

Some of the teachers professional associations have been active. The Science Masters Association and the Modern Language Association were instrumental in securing much of the early curriculum development funds for their own subjects. The National Association for Teaching English has established an international reputation.

The converse, of course, operates: the teacher can be a barrier to change. Much innovation, particularly in the curriculum, threatens teachers. Where traditionally they have been the source of authority, they increasingly find themselves as one among many with a view to contribute. They face all the challenges as the sociologist, Basil Bernstein, points out of having to move from a "given" to an "achieved" role(3). On top of all this they have to try to reduce innovation to a communicable level in terms of management and organisation.

The teacher in the most critical position, potentially the greatest barrier, is the head; though the position of the head in the primary school may be less vulnerable than the head in the secondary school. The primary school head is likely to be one generalist teacher among many. He can exert an immense authority within the school; he is expected to go into every classroom. The secondary school larger, more hierarchic, is potentially more bureaucratic. It is likely to be compartmented by its specialisms and the head less able, therefore, to exert control over the content or method of colleagues' approaches.

2. Local education authorities

The structure of English education is often defined as a national system locally administered. True, there are national legal obligations on authorities to provide education and some national regulations about the way they provide it: uniform pay scales for teachers and officials, centrally-defined cost limits for buildings, national systems of examinations. Yet local education authorities are free to organise their schools as they wish. They administer the system, they spend the money. In many cases they take the initiative. What happens may depend on their political complexion, their traditions, the accident of geography, and indeed their size(4).

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(1) The Educational Innovators. W.A.C. Stewart.

(2) Examples are Sybil Marshall and David Holbrook.

(3) New Society, 14 September 1967.

(4) There are at present 163 local education authorities. The smallest has a total population of 30,000, the largest outside London a population of over one million. A Royal Commission on Local Government recommended in 1969 that authorities should fall within a population range of 200,000 to 500,000. On their recommendations this would reduce the numbers of authorities to 58.

They certainly vary. Authorities have different ages of transfer from primary to secondary schooling, different forms of secondary schooling and many differences on discretionary provision - the scale of nursery education, allowances for books and equipment, the numbers of teachers above the minimum. They have approached new developments at notably different speeds. Some of these local education authorities have started the primary school revolution in Britain,and some have paved the way for the government to adopt a non-selective secondary education system.(2)

Local advisers or inspectors

Most local education authorities have teams of promoted teachers as advisers, the range and degree of specialisation usually depending upon the authority's size. Advisers' (or inspectors') work consists largely of visiting schools and of running in-service training courses and generally trying to improve mediocre teaching. They also influence the system through the active part they play in the promotion of heads.

Increasingly, however, they are being called on to interpret significant new developments in teaching. In certain cases in primary education they have been notably influential. For just as in the primary school the head has easy access to different classes and teachers, so the primary adviser has easy access to the head. The advisers seem to have been more successful with maths than languages, with science than humanities. Teachers' centres offer them new opportunities of development work with teachers.

As new curriculum projects proliferate, the rôle of the advisers as necessary guides and interpreters may become still more important.

Teachers' centres

The idea of local development centres for teachers comes from the Schools Council. There are 500 or so now in existence most have been set up and are run by the local education authorities; a few have been set up by universities or colleges of education.

Basically, teachers' centres are intended to be "very local, very accessible centres where teachers can meet, regularly and informally, to test, display, to devise and to discuss their own work and the work of others. If we are having a curriculum revolution, this is how we hope to achieve it. It is at these centres that teachers, teacher educators, local authority staffs and university workers come together - with sometimes those of the youth service, or the employers or the other users of education. The promise of these centres is that they will reflect what can succeed in this town and this village".(1) It may be in a teachers' centre that pressure for a national curriculum project first builds up. It should certainly be there that the results of a national project are evaluated and interpreted through some sort of in-service training. The centres should also stimulate their own development work.

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(1) Joslyn Owen quoted in Curriculum Innovation in Practice by J. Stuart Maclure, H.M.S.O. 1968.

(2) See p.36 for the effects of a change of government

Their potential is obvious, their achievement less so. Many are recent. They vary in subject coverage and accessibility. They vary in the interest or control that the local authority tries to exercise. They vary in their activities. At a recent Schools Council conference it was discovered that at many centres the emphasis was almost entirely on open discussion and exchange of views and not on devising specific contributions to teaching within certain subject areas. To quote Owen again (1): "As long as the lecture/seminar/discussion group methods of traditional in-service training are regarded as the principal methods appropriate to curriculum development, teachers seem unlikely to provide and to work within their own framework of activity."

The Centre

1. The Department of Education and Science

It is the duty of the Secretary of State for Education and Science (or Minister for Education until 1964) to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose. The Education Act of 1944 specifically charges the Secretary of State with the duty "to secure the effective execution, by local authorities under his control, and direction of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area."

The Secretary of State's part in directing national policy has, on the whole, been determined in close co-operation with the local education authorities. This is practical politics. To operate smoothly, policies need the support of many of the 163 authorities, a large number of whom will differ from the government in political outlook.

The central government has, however, made a number of important policy decisions since 1944. The system now looks very different from what it was when the act was passed. Thus the all-age elementary schools have disappeared, small rural schools are going, secondary schools are becoming non selective; teacher-training courses have been lengthened from two years to three; unqualified teachers are being edged out of the schools; a local authority sector of higher education has been created, headed by the polytechnics; a great expansion of higher education, including the universities, is taking place.

Mostly the central government influence on the education system is exercised through its control of costs. Some of this control is exercised directly, for example, with the school building programme, with school meals and the number of places in teacher training. Some of it is more indirect but nevertheless quite close. For though most of the current costs of education are met by local authorities, and though the government contribution to those costs is in the form of a general grant, government funds are given on the basis of detailed estimates.

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(1) Joslyn Owen quoted in Curriculum Innovation in Practice by J. Stuart Maclure, H.M.S.O. 1968.

The interest for this report is that in some of these areas the department has branched out from supervision to development. The policing function - seeing that standards are maintained and that finance is controlled - is no longer its sole one. School building is an example. Here the department's architects branch is behind much of the excellent development work on school design, working in association with local education authorities.

But the content of education is one area where the department has never effectively moved from its supervisory role. The reasons why it has not done so reveal a great deal about the English attitudes to innovation.

In this area, the Secretary of State has two responsibilities: to maintain standards, and to co-ordinate the national provision of examinations. Both are generally delegated: examinations to the Schools Council (see page 18); maintaining standards to a central inspectorate, to Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools.

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools

There are 550 HMIs. They have four functions. They are required to inspect, assess and report on all schools and on other educational institutions which the government aids financially, except the universities; they give advice and in-service training to the staffs of schools and colleges; they encourage educational development; and they form a link between the Department of Education, the local education authorities and the Schools Council.

The HMIs are in a unique position to know what is going on. They are organised on both a regional and a subject basis with responsibilities extending over most of the education system departments. They can use this unrivalled view of the system to disseminate successful practice, especially through the large number of their in-service training courses. Take their management course for heads, a fairly recently established course. Head teachers involved in secondary reorganisation are likely to face much larger schools, mixed schools where they have been used to single sex, and a much wider range of ability among their pupils. How can they be helped with the much more demanding administrative job? The inspectorate will have seen ways in which some schools manage successfully, and others which have found the usual pitfalls. This experience can be reflected in their courses.

Increasingly they are publishing surveys based on local inspections, which can bring good practice to the notice of an even wider audience. Recent examples include surveys of language laboratories, children with cerebral palsy, home-school relations and organising middle schools for children of 8 to 12 or 9 to 13.

Sometimes individual HMIs become national educational figures. One HMI took on almost single-handed the job of making primary schools aware of new approaches to maths(1). She took the view that it was no

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(1) Mathematics in the Primary School, H.M.S.O. 1965.

good just telling teachers about it, they must be involved. Her courses up and down the country became development courses run by teacher training institutions. Another case is mentioned in the primary education chapter.

These examples are typical in that inspectors tend to get caught up individually in innovation. There is no question of the inspectorate taking on the task of introducing widespread change through some institution of its own. It is not charged with the in-service training that should be associated with a curriculum development project. Nor is it involved in a very obvious manner (except through the Schools Council, see page 18) in planning future curriculum development.

It may well strike an outsider as odd: if HMIs are in such a good position to identify trends, why do they not take a stronger developmental role on behalf of the department? This was tried once - and as government-based strategy it failed.

The curriculum study group

The boost that the Russian sputnik is said to have given American curriculum development in 1957 took a bit of time to cross the Atlantic. But by 1962-63, there were a number of educationists wondering what should be done in England. The Nuffield Foundation was already considering financing a science development project.

Quite independently the Department of Education was thinking about creating a ministry group (analogous with the development group of architects) to stimulate the renewal or redevelopment of school curricula. It appeared to have ready-made resources with the expertise of the HMI's to back up its officials. At the same time the Department had a recommendation from its advisory committee on examinations (the Secondary Schools Examinations Council) that it should devise a new secondary school examination (the Certificate of Secondary Education). It was logical to link exam work with curriculum.

So the Curriculum Study Group was set up, with a dozen or so members and a brief to cover curriculum and examinations. Apart from one academic with a special interest in evaluation, all were officials or HMIs, some of whom had been attached to the Minister's Secondary Schools' Examinations Council. Working with the SSEC, in a very short life the group generated a mass of ideas. It set up the Certificate of Secondary Education, a revolutionary concept in English examinations because it can be school-based if teachers choose so. It worked out priorities for curriculum development projects (it was able to lean on the Nuffield Foundation for ideas on how to run a development project). It formulated a strategy for dissemination and local development through teachers' centres (working, it suggested, to a regional organisation).

But none of this was public knowledge at the time. For the Curriculum Study Group, though potentially creative like the Architects and Buildings Branch development group, ran into almost immediate trouble. In part it may well have been the victim of a larger dispute: the Minister of Education was already quarrelling with the teachers' and local authority organisations on teachers' pay machinery. The CSG was thus a handy extra weapon. Local education authorities and teachers alike were up in arms at the idea of a government department "ursurping"

their responsibilities. The charges stuck. Correspondence in an educational journal at the time immortalised the opposition: "We've fought two world wars only to be faced with this."

Within a few months of the establishment of the Curriculum Study Group, the Minister of Education agreed to its abolition and that instead there should be machinery for the development of schools curricula and examinations representative of all education interests: teachers, local authorities, voluntary bodies and the universities. A working party(1) was established to devise such machinery. This move signalled the end of the Curriculum Study Group and the beginning of the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations.

So the Group was a failure. Or was it? In fact it seems that it failed only on the most limited interpretation. It failed as a ministry group. One of the civil servants involved (the late Derek Morrell), who within a few months of the establishment of the Curriculum Study Group was instrumental in getting the Schools Council working party set up, viewed it differently. In the long term, he argued, the Curriculum Study Group was unlikely to be as effective as the architects' development group; it was not because of its methods, but because it was attached to the wrong power base. With school building there was no doubt of the minister's control: he held the purse strings. But with the curriculum at that stage no one quite knew whether teacher control was a myth or not. It was only when the Curriculum Study Group was set up that it became clear from the reactions to it that control of the curriculum genuinely rested in an area occupied by teachers and local education authorities. It became obvious then that the Curriculum Study Group should be the servant of other masters.

The methods of the Curriculum Study Group, as Morrell suggested, have been triumphantly vindicated in getting curriculum development work moving in England. When the CSG moved in as the strong secretariat for the newly created Schools Council it moved in with ideas for development and ideas for putting them into operation, and gave it the sort of boost that would never have come just with evolution.

Research

After the experience of the Curriculum Study Group, the Department of Education seems likely to revert to a more indirect role in curriculum innovation. But this is potentially important, especially where research is concerned (see page 23 for other research bodies). The DES research budget has grown from £20,000 in 1962-63 to nearly £370,000 in 1967-68, by which time more than £2 million was committed on 135 projects. The DES generally aims to link grants to projects with policy implications. Nevertheless this is, by continental standards, a half hearted dirigisme.

The best known example is the support for an "action-research" project into educational priority area programmes, which the DES finances

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(1) The Lockwood Working Party which produced the Schools Curricula and Examinations, H.M.S.O. 1964.

together with the Social Science Research Council with a three year grant of £175,000. This research project is under the direction of Dr. A.H. Halsey of Nuffield College, Oxford. It is aimed at finding ways and, to some extent, evaluating methods of improving the attainment of children in impoverished circumstances, of encouring their teachers and of linking home and school. The project is also experimenting with a pre-school language programme. It is, in English terms, a breakthrough to assert that reforms in social policy may be conducted through social science experiment: though at this stage it is too early to say whether the faith pinned on the research will be justified.

The New Style Innovators

The Nuffield Foundation, the Schools Council and the National Council for Educational Technology have an aim in common. They are committed to stimulating self-conscious and coherent change. Nuffield and the Schools Council, both primarily concerned with curriculum development, also share a method. Though the Schools Council's functions range wider than Nuffield's, they have both concentrated their support on curriculum development teams working to an elaborate and seemingly efficient procedure. This section describes them and discusses the strategies. NCET is mainly concerned with the management of innovation and I shall consider that separately.

1. The Nuffield Foundation

English curriculum development owes the Nuffield Foundation a great debt, for it pioneered the idea of curriculum development on a national scale while at the same time maintaining the principle that teachers should play a large, if not dominant, role in development. It started by taking up some of the ideas of the teachers' specialist associations and offered to finance and organise full-time development work.

The Nuffield Foundation is a charitable trust which was set up in the 1940s. Its interests extend across the social services and to scientific and medical research. But education, and particularly curriculum development, has in the last few years absorbed a sizeable part of its budget. Each of the Nuffield projects, claimed the then director, Brian Young, arose from a growing concern among teachers all over the country that the teaching approach in classroom and laboratory needed to be reviewed in the light of recent advances in knowledge, current views on the nature of learning and a new emphasis on the active part that the pupil should play in the learning process. There seemed in the early 1960s to be general agreement that something more was needed than a mere redrafting of syllabuses. The Nuffield curriculum projects were therefore designed to give outstanding teachers the time and the facilities to reappraise their aims and methods in a way which would not be possible while teaching a full programme. Each scheme has aimed to provide "a distillation of what lively teachers are doing to revitalise the classroom presentation of their subject." The Nuffield Foundation has tried to ensure by appropriate examinations that testing (as well as teaching) is directed at acquiring a working understanding of the subject instead of just accumulating facts about it.

The strategy of development is essentially co-operative, with teachers playing a dominant role. The range of Nuffield-supported activities and the fact that these share so many characteristics with the Schools Council's approach (described on page 16) shows how much groundwork had been done before the Schools Council was set up.

Nuffield started with science for secondary school children and then branched out into mathematics and modern languages; later it extended its support to projects for the primary-secondary age range and to projects in linguistics. It was beginning to work in the humanities when the Schools Council was established; and it had moved still further afield with, for instance, its Resources for Learning Project - a study of ways of organising work in schools to make the best possible use of teachers' skills and of new developments in methods and equipment (using machines to help children to learn to read, for example, and designing a correspondence course for sixth formers in subjects where there is a great shortage of specialist teachers).

The programme has diminished since 1967, the time when the Schools Council was getting into its stride. From that time, Nuffield stopped commissioning projects and started to share sponsorship of a number of its projects with the Schools Council. Between 1961 and 1967, it had set up 16 development projects. For much of that time it was in a position of unrivalled influence on curriculum development.

It could have been unhealthy. As Derek Morrell put it(1): "A wrong decision might easily have been made. Had the development work been carried out by a small group of backroom boys without forging close links with many different schools, universities and examining boards, application of the results would have been slow and difficult. In fact application is likely to be rapid."

Nevertheless, Nuffield-sponsored curriculum work has in one sense gone off at a tangent which it is unlikely that any representative body would have followed. Nuffield drew its bright teachers and its trial schools predominantly from the public schools (i.e. the most elite of the independent schools) and thus development work was geared to the special curriculum of these schools. For example the science projects worked on separate chemistry, physics and biology, with courses leading to examinations (i.e. the Ordinary and Advanced Levels of the General Certificate of Education).

Curriculum projects more appropriate to the comprehensive school have been slower to develop, though the science teams, having worked their way through G.C.E. 'A'-level, are now working on combined sciences for the whole of the twelve-year-old age group. The Nuffield public schools bias has also meant that their projects tended not to be of much use to the groups who were quite possibly in the greatest need; the pupils who have disliked school so much that they drop out at the first opportunity but who will have to stay an extra year from 1972-73 when the school leaving age goes up.

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(1) Derek Morrell: Education and Change. Joseph Payne Memorial Lectures to the College of Preceptors, 1966.

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2. The Schools Council

The Schools Council epitomises the most systematic of the English approaches to school innovation. Its novelty lies in an organised approach which is still consistent with the decentralised structure of the English educational system. Having been set up to solve two problems (one professional, one political), the Council has evolved in its solutions to those problems as an important institutional device. It is a force for variety and for greater professionalism in education.

History

Politically the Schools Council had to appease the educational organisations which felt threatened by the Curriculum Study Group. Its complicated constitution is designed to make it a truly representative body, representing all the major education interests and giving teachers a majority on all but its finance committees. Members are nominated by organisations. They cover the spectrum of teachers unions, teacher training and further education interests, the voluntary bodies as well as the local education authorities, the Department of Education and the HMIs.

Its secretariat is also representative. Of its three joint secretaries one is seconded from the Department of Education, one from the HM Inspectorate and one from a local education authority. The joint secretaries are supported by a research team under a research director, field officers responsible for keeping in touch with schools and a large information section.

The professional problem to be overcome was described in 1963 by the Lockwood committee (which devised the Schools Council's constitution and terms of reference (see page 15) as "basically one of inadequate co-ordination where different areas of responsibility touch or overlap", such as insufficient co-ordination between the development of curriculum content or teaching techniques and policy on examinations. These were influences, the committee argued, which could in time seriously diminish the responsibility of schools for their own work.

The Lockwood committee was conditioned by traditional English beliefs about where innovation really takes place: "We note it has long been accepted in England and Wales that the schools should have the fullest possible measure of responsibility for their own work, including responsibility for their own curricula and teaching methods, which should be evolved by their own staff to meet the needs of their own pupils. We reaffirm the importance of this principle and believe that positive action is needed to uphold it .....

"The responsibility placed upon the schools is a heavy one. If it is to be successfully carried the teachers must have adequate time and opportunity for regular reappraisal of the content and methods of their work in the light of new knowledge and of the changing needs of pupils and society. A sustained and planned programme of work is required, going well beyond what can be achieved by occasional conferences and courses or by the thinking and writing of busy teachers in their spare time.

"We concluded therefore that there was no need to define a new principle in relation to the schools curricula and practice. Our task was to examine how far the existing principle is being realised in practice and whether new arguments are needed to uphold and interpret it."

Function

The Lockwood committee provided the following terms of reference for a Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations:

> "The objects .... are to uphold and interpret the principle that each school should have the fullest possible measure of responsibility for its own work with its own curriculum and teaching methods based on the needs of its own pupils and evolved by its own staff; and to seek through co-operative study of common problems to assist all who have individual or joint responsibilities for or in connection with the schools curricula and examinations to co-ordinate their actions in harmony with this principle.
>
> "In order to promote these objects the Council will keep under review curricula, teaching methods and examinations in primary and secondary schools including aspects of school organisation so far as they affect the curriculum and will draw attention to difficulties arising in these fields which appear to merit consideration by other appropriate authorities."
>
> In particular the Council will:
>
> (1) discuss with the schools the ways in which, through research and development and by other means, the Council can assist the school to meet both the individual needs of their pupils and the educational needs of the community as a whole;
>
> (2) ascertain the views and interests of the schools on all matters falling within the Council's terms of reference, represent those views and interest in discussion of such matters with any bodies or persons concerned directly or indirectly with education in all its aspects; and will be free to publish its findings and recommendations at its own discretion;
>
> (3) carry out all the functions hitherto undertaken by the Secondary Schools Examinations Council, and such other functions as the Minister, acting in his capacity as central co-ordinating authority for secondary school examinations, may remit to the Council;
>
> (4) offer advice on request to any member interested and so far as practicable to any other bodies and persons concerned with the work of the schools."

Action on the curriculum and examinations

(1) Research and development. These activities, but particularly curriculum development, account for the major part of the Schools Council effort. Of its budget of about £1.5 million annually (provided

by the Department of Education and the local education authorities), a large part goes on curriculum development projects.

These activities are intended to provide a focus for change. Most involve the production of new materials in print, film or on tape. And since to an increasing extent it is believed by curriculum developers that the projects present teachers with the need to change attitudes as well as the need simply to update the content of the curriculum, some in-service training is regarded as an essential element.

Most projects work to a similar pattern. A proposal for development is put to the Schools Council. A director is appointed. He or she chooses a team which is likely to include seconded teachers and an evaluation officer. They should clarify the aims of the project. Then, three to five years are spent devising and trying out materials in selected trial schools. The material, and possibly the methods, are revised in the light of the schools' comments. The evaluator should be contributing at this point too. Then, generally, key teachers or teacher trainers are brought together to ensure that they understand the implications of the project and can train others in the use of the new materials.

Since curriculum development implies a threat to teachers' existing practice the subjects chosen for study have been predominant that teachers have wanted. Hence the Schools Council moved swiftly to establish a number of projects in preparation for the raising of the school leaving age to 16, in 1972-73, in linguistics and modern languages. **But in the sixth form teachers have often been unwilling to experiment with pupils whose higher education chances depend on examination results.The sixth** form, exam centred, hence syllabus - and teacher - dominated, tends to be a block in the cycle of development. For a cycle is apparent. On the whole it seems to be trying to combine the best of the child-centred approach of the primary school with the seminar methods of the university, instead of categorising styles of learning by institution.

The early Nuffield projects had started with the belief that the content of the curriculum needed changing. They even called the work curriculum "renewal" and concentrated on the "useful" subjects such as sciences and modern languages. They also tended to concentrate on a limited group of pupils.

But some of the later Nuffield work and more particularly a number of Schools Council projects have been more concerned with the attitudes of teachers and pupils. These innovators begin to realise, as Derek Morrell put it(1) "That what they need to be concerned with is the manner in which schools and teachers intervene to modify the child's learning and with the questions on what authority and by what methods they are entitled and can realistically expect to do so." For the fact is that children will learn something from their experience of school whatever a teacher does. They may enjoy learning; they may learn only to hate it. In all cases what children learn is bound to be affected by their relationship with their teachers.

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(1) Derek Morrell: Education and Change. Joseph Payne Memorial Lectures to the College of Preceptors, 1966.

Much curriculum development is a form of research. Increasingly teams set out with hypotheses to be tested and expect that their work should be evaluated as the project goes on. According to the research director of the Schools Council, Jack Wrigley, "most of us in the Schools Council do not believe that there is a very clear division between curriculum development and research."(1)

Nevertheless the Schools Council make some money available specifically to research, on condition that the research is compatible with the Council's policy, that it illuminates some aspect of curriculum development or of examinations and that it has some possibility of improving classroom teaching. Research commissioned by the Schools Council includes a study of attitudes of pupils, teachers and parents affected by the decision to raise the school leaving age, and a number of studies related to classroom organisation or learning theory, for example, the formation of scientific concepts. Much of the research is directed at examinations.

(2) Recommendations on behalf of schools. This, in fact, the Schools Council seems not to have done. It is one consequence of a delegated membership (and one consequence of a strongly held belief in pluralism) that there are few issues on which the Council would speak unanimously. For example, when the Government in 1968 postponed the raising of the school leaving age to 16, the Council did not feel in any position to condemn the move, despite the numerous projects committed to the programme for raising the leaving age.

(3) Examinations. Work on examinations rates in importance with work on the curriculum though with examinations the Schools Council is in a different relationship to the Government. Generally it is advisory to all its member interests. On examinations it is advisory to the Secretary of State.

It is logical that the same body should be concerned with development work on both curriculum and examinations. So far, however, there has been little exam reform which has grown out of curriculum development, except in the General Certificate of Education Ordinary level science papers. But because examinations generate much more public interest, the Schools Council work on examinations is much better known than its work on curriculum. The Schools Council's predecessor, the Secondary Schools Examination Council, was responsible for developing a radically new examination for 16 year olds (the Certificate of Secondary Education) designed for pupils of average ability and above who would not be suited to the General Certificate of Education. The Schools Council has been responsible for assessing the examinations' reliability and validity.

The Schools Council has also had sub-committees trying to devise a new pattern of sixth form examinations, which would be suitable for the non-university oriented pupils who increasingly stay on at the schools. But so far the Council has not approved any proposals.

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(1) From a paper by Jack Wrigley on the Schools Council and Research to be published in a forthcoming volume of Research in Education.

(4) Advice and publicity. The Schools Council does not have direct contact with the schools nor necessarily with teachers centres, despite projects' contacts with their trial schools. So at the most basic information level it produces an attractive and informative termly broadsheet, Dialogue. It has, additionally, a vast publishing programme (contracted out to commercial publishers) for working papers and field reports. It is also responsible for the publication of project materials.

So far, few project materials have been published. Two were published in 1969; a dozen more are scheduled for 1970-71. So far it is not clear whether the fact of publication, with the Schools Council approval, invests the material with an unusual authority compared with its commercial counterparts. Nor is it clear how far publication will fossilise development in the area concerned.

3. The National Council for Educational Technology

The Schools Council interest in innovation has broadened, as the preceding section shows, from a primary concern with curriculum development to a related concern with research and the training of teachers. But the Schools Council has not concerned itself with the management of innovation - with suggesting how changes in content need to be integrated into a teaching method.

These are however the concern of a newcomer to the educational scene, the National Council for Educational Technology. The Council was set up in 1967, a modified Government response to a recommendation for a National Centre for Educational Technology. The centre was intended by those who put forward the suggestion(1) to be a focal point for future research and development. NCET's remit is to act as a central agency for promoting research, co-ordinating training and disseminating information on educational technology. NCET has also to advise bodies, including government departments concerned with education and training in industry and the service, on audio-visual media and on the most appropriate and economical ways of using them.

Educational technology is interpreted as comprising "the process of applying available knowledge in a systematic way to problems in education and training."(2) NCET is a long way from being a body which merely suggests the best buy for teaching machines or overhead projectors. At school level, it sees its job as helping to solve problems with the aid of technology. For instance how can a teacher give individual attention to every student in a class of widely spread attainments, how to select the most appropriate resources for a particular topic at a particular level, how to locate and obtain these resources quickly and easily, how to provide compensatory techniques - whether for deprived children or say, a student who has been out of school for some time.

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(1) Audio-Visual Aids in Higher Education. Brynmor Jones report: H.M.S.O, 1966.

(2) Towards More Effective Learning, NCET, 1969.

One recently started NCET project is aimed at helping deprived children between the ages of four and eight with audio-visual materials, particularly television, which they are likely to have at home. Another to use various media for mathematics courses - maths being the subject with the most severe teacher shortage. NCET is also trying to develop a course for non-specialists who have a grounding in maths, producing special materials which the pupil can use largely by himself. These are aimed at many sixth form and first year university students. NCET wants to encourage work on computer based learning. But in each case it is dependent on funds being made available from outside since it has no development budget of its own. It is a melancholy situation.

Despite its wider remit, covering higher education and industry and the services, NCET's method of work is similar to that of the Schools Council. Ideally, NCET claims, it should attempt "to provide a skeletal framework which could be reinforced at the regional level and finally built on at the local level." The Council therefore has kept closely in touch with regional development (especially where expense and the users' requirements have already stimulated regional co-operation, e.g. closed circuit television). It is in contact with teachers' centres.

There is clearly a place for NCET. But will it be given the funds to enable it to fill it?

On the Fringe

The institutions discussed so far have been involved in the whole process of innovation: research and development, diffusion and adoption. But there are a number of institutions which need to be mentioned which are involved in particular aspects only of the innovatory process. At the research and development end, there are most notably the universities, the National Foundation for Educational Research and the Social Science Research Council. At the diffusion end of the process are the teacher training institutions (again universities, but also the colleges of education). Government advisory bodies also have some part to play: in general theirs is a diffusing function, though occasionally a committee will put up suggestions which form the basis for action of a new sort.

The National Foundation for Educational Research

The NFER's research has a practical bias. It was set up in 1947 by the Department of Education and the local education authorities to complement the usually more fundamental research of the universities. About a quarter of its work it funds itself, the rest is commissioned. In the early days much of its effort went into devising intelligence tests and until recently the projects have been strongly biased towards educational psychology. Vocational guidance research, and research on examinations and tests are still an important part of its work, but it is notable that many of the recently established projects are concerned with curriculum or environment. It has not, however, undertaken any research on the economics of education.

Among its current major studies are an evaluation of the Schools Council primary French project, a series of projects on teaching young

children to read, a part in the International Evaluation of Achievement, and an investigation of the organisation of comprehensive schools.

Indeed the recently appointed director of the NFER argues strongly for an extension of the NFER's involvement in innovation, particularly in the curriculum. In discussing the work of the Schools Council(1) he has written of his anxiety that the Council has not pursued curriculum evaluation with the same enthusiasm as curriculum reform. "Let it be made clear," he says "that curriculum evaluation must be a much more comprehensive exercise than many tend to assume. Its purpose is to discover how far the detailed aims of the curriculum have been achieved. Now when we list the aims of our curricula and do this - as, in my view, is essential - in terms of behavioural change in pupils, it will be found that the aims go beyond the relatively simple matter of acquiring information and skills, and they inevitably lead into the field of attitudes. Many (probably the majority) of such attitudes are the product of the method of teaching rather than the content of teaching. (No amount of curriculum development will reduce the importance of the good teacher). If curriculum evaluation is to provide an effective validatory function for curriculum change we shall need the full co-operation of educational researchers and psychometricians in order to produce adequate measuring instruments of attitude and motivation as well as attainment."

It is a plea which takes its place in a long, long English story - the story of **English teachers' reluctance to accept the importance of research.**

The Social Science Research Council

The SSRC is the new arrival among the public bodies which finance educational research. With a budget of about £2.5 million for all the social sciences, it acts in part as a conventional research agency, giving grants in response to applications. After three full years of activity it is now beginning to refine its strategy. It now sponsors some programmes of research, and has set up research units on wide-ranging topics, such as race relations.

As far as education is concerned, the main beneficiary has been an action research programme on educational priority area policy(2). The intention of the project is not to try and produce an evaluation of compensatory education techniques (impossible in the three-year timetable and with the £175,000 available from the SSRC and the Department of Education and Science) but merely to demonstrate the possibilities of a particular approach in a variety of circumstances, concentrating particularly on pre-school experience and on various means of strengthening links between schools and a community. The project is trying to establish guidelines for government policy, i.e. whether intervention works, whether there needs to be a particular

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(1) Stephen Wiseman in Research in Education, May, 1969, University of Manchester.

(2) This is the project directed by Dr. A.H. Halsey referred to above (page 15).

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kind of intervention for deprived children.

There has been some controversy as to whether the SSRC should have sponsored this project or whether its role should be to support fundamental research. There are signs that with a new chairman the future emphasis will be more on basic research.

Universities

In the early stages of curriculum development and in contrast with a number of countries, the universities had little direct involvement in school innovation. Their contribution has been more in the (expected) direction of fundamental research, chiefly in the sociology and philosophy of education. There is some work on theories of learning and intelligence, and recently universities have taken a lot more interest in the economics of education(1).

The universities' interest now looks like becoming much more direct. Sussex, for example, has an educational technology centre. The University of London has a unit working on linguistics. Increasingly curriculum developments are being sited in universities. The modern languages project is based at York, Nuffield science at London, the Nuffield-Schools Council Humanities project has just moved to East Anglia, another Schools Council Humanities project is based at Keele. Increasingly, also, universities are recognising curriculum development as a permanent feature, by creating professorships in the curriculum.

One university, Manchester, has pioneered curriculum development regionally, using a very different approach from most of the Schools Council projects. It acts as a servicing agency for local teachers to help them devise new courses for raising the school leaving age and has given an unusually academic flavour to development. To start with, teachers spent many months hammering out objectives for themselves (an approach which has produced some difficulties and confusion). The Manchester strategy is also distinctive. It has effectively linked teachers' centres in a number of neighbouring local education authorities in a common effort with the university, whereas most Schools Council projects have created their links direct with schools. The Schools Council is now aiding the project

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(1) Some examples, invidious though it is to choose. Sociology: A.H. Halsey and Jean Floud of Oxford on education and opportunity; Stephen Wiseman, then of Manchester, on education and environment; J.W.B. Douglas of London on a follow-up study of 5,000 children born in 1946; William Taylor of Bristol on schools and teacher training; Basil Bernstein of London on language use and social class. Philosophy: Richard Peters of London. Intelligence and learning theories: Cyril Burt and H.J. Eysenk of London; G. Peel of Birminghan; Liam Hudson of Edinburgh; J. Fitzpatrick of Manchester; and P.E. Vernon. Economics of education: John Vaizey of Brunel; Mark Blaug of London.

This co-operation between teachers and academics is hopeful. Curriculum development will be more effective for a dialogue about its aim and methods. It could also help to overcome the hostility which seems to be the much more usual response to universities showing interest in what is happening in schools. For instance when a group of London academics recently produced a book evaluating the Plowden report(1) it was more widely regarded as an attempt to destroy a "progressive approach" than as a contribution to discussion.

The education and training of teachers

This section concerns the universities and colleges of education. Universities are involved in two ways. They provide within departments of education training courses for graduates. Most are one-year courses taken after a student's subject degree. A few universities are experimenting with "concurrent" courses - i.e. students do their teacher training at the same time as they are working for a degree. Most universities also run institutes of education. These are responsible for the academic content of courses in colleges of education. The majority of colleges of education concentrate on three "general" training courses. (There are a few for art colleges and for domestic science teaching). The general courses may be biased towards primary or secondary teaching but share a common pattern of concurrent training. A recent innovation is the introduction of degree courses, involving usually a year tacked on to the existing three year course.

Manchester's department has been famous for its work on educational psychology. Bristol is strong on the administration of education and in-service training. But universities have only recently become involved in development work on behalf of schools, as curriculum projects have been attached to universities and as professorships in curriculum have been established.

The common complaint about university department and institute involvement in innovation is the old one: that they do not do much to lessen the gap between theory and practice. It is possibly significant that a university whose vice-chancellor is an ex-schoolmaster (and where the professors too were teachers) has done most to bridge this gap. It is York which has joint appointments with the local education authority: to the university they are part-time tutors, to the local education authority part-time advisers.

The colleges have been diffusers of change rather than developers. One of their problems has been having to work to so many masters. They are maintained by the local education authorities or voluntary bodies; their courses are developed in conjunction with the university institutes of education (through area training organisations); and their numbers are controlled by the Secretary of State for Education who is responsible for the supply of teachers and, over the last ten years, priority has been given to expansion.

On the Secretary of State's behalf, the Department of Education has on the whole resisted attempts to diversify the system of teacher training. The colleges, though larger than they were, remain monotechnic. Five teacher training departments have been set up experimentally within technical colleges. But they have not been able to break out of the university orbit, responsibility for the content of their courses

(1) Perspectives on Plowden, ed. Richard Peters, 1969, Routledge and Kegan Paul.

remaining with the university institutes of education. In theory these departments and the colleges of education themselves could get their degree courses approved by the Council for National Academic Awards, a degree-awarding body for non-university institutions. In practice, there has been little encouragement for students in colleges to work for degrees other than university-awarded B.Eds.

However the colleges have established themselves as an important element in the cycle of innovation. They have been largely responsible for diffusing ideas of informal primary education. Aided by the vast turnover of teachers (four fifths of women teachers leave within five years of starting to teach) and by their own history of preparing teachers for elementary and later primary schools, they have been able to make their views clear to schools.

Few colleges have branched out into development. A reason is suggested by Professor William Taylor(1), Their values, says Taylor, have been oriented towards social and literary romanticism: "The romantic-infra-structure has shown itself as a partial rejection of the pluralism of values associated with conditions of advanced industrialisation; a suspicion of the intellect and the intellectual, a lack of interest in political and structural change; a stress upon the intuitive and the intangible, upon spontaneity and creativity; an attempt to find personal autonomy through the arts; a hunger for the satisfactions of inter-personal life within the community and the small groups and a flight from rationality." There has not been much opportunity for the "creative non-conformity" that might have enabled the colleges to advance significantly in the quality of their work and its effect upon the educational system in general. But with the worst of the strains of expansion now over, and a government enquiry set up in 1970 to consider their future, the colleges have a chance to disprove Taylor's judgement.

Government Advisory Bodies

The government advisory bodies include Central Advisory Councils for Education, one for England and one for Wales. Over the past ten years or so they have been given an area of the system to consider and have been able to make wide ranging proposals. For example the Crowther Council was concerned with the education of fifteen to eighteen-year-olds(2), the Newsom Council with secondary children of average and less than average ability(3), and the Plowden Council with primary education(4).

A committee set up by the Prime Minister, the Robbins Committee, had a similar job to do on higher education. Teacher education and training in the 1950s and early 1960s was influenced by the National

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(1) Society and the Education of Teachers, Faber and Faber, 1969.

(2) 15 to 18, H.M.S.O.1959.

(3) Half Our Future, H.M.S.O. 1963.

(4) Children and Their Primary Schools (The Plowden report) H.M.S.O. 1967.

Advisory Council on the Supply and Training of Teachers.

Some of these committees have been quite influential, aiding innovation in two ways. They have commissioned research, which has not only added weight to their recommendations but has provided ammunition for continued lobbying (as in the case of the Crowther evidence of the waste of ability among the early school leavers). They have also been important agents in diffusing progressive ideas. The needs of lower ability children have had attention focussed on them as a result of the Newsom Report. Modern developments in primary education have been stimulated by the Plowden committee's account of the pioneering then taking place. The Robbins committee on higher education created acceptance for the idea that a vast expansion of higher education was inevitable.

But councils have not been commissioned consistently to consider policy. A central advisory council was never, for instance, asked to consider the merits of comprehensive education. Nor has there been an expected correlation between specific terms of reference and their innovatory effect. The Crowther committee ha the most strategic terms of reference: how to implement the unfulfilled recommendations of the 1944 Education Act. In effect this meant how should the school leaving age be raised and how should the act's provision for compulsory part-time education to 18 be put into operation. But the Government shelved most of the report. The Plowden council was asked to consider primary education "in all its aspects". Yet it made two suggestions of great innovatory importance. The educational priority area programme of Government discrimination in favour of deprived areas is being partially adopted. An action research programme is in progress(1) and the Government gives some priority to EPAs in building programmes and in extra pay for teachers. Plowden also suggested a reform of the school starting system to allow for an extension of nursery education and a more flexible start to schooling.

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(1) This is the project directed by Dr. A.H. Halsey referred to above (page 15).

PART III

CHANGE IN ACTION

Change in Primary Education

Primary education is changing and much of that is due to the local education authorities. This section will therefore be concerned with the relationship of the local education authority and the schools in innovation.

Primary education covers the five to eleven age range. Children may voluntarily go to nursery school before that, though the demand for places outstrips the supply. The English system is unusual in that it has been accepted for a century that children up to the age of six or seven need quite different treatment from older boys and girls. So until then, they are educated in infants' schools (with their own head teacher) or infants' departments (under the same head as the junior school). The junior stage lasts until eleven.

And then there has been the great hurdle: the selection examination for secondary education, known as the 'eleven plus'. Its purpose is to separate off the 20 per cent or so brightest children in each area for grammar school. As the Plowden committee remarked, "the 'eleven plus' is as firmly fixed in Englishmen's minds as 1066". It has been prominently fixed in the minds of junior schools. With that sort of responsibility many junior schools have felt forced to direct most of their efforts to formal teaching, often dividing the children into ability groups. In contrast with the freedom, the diversity of experiences and the generally child-centred approach of the infant school, the junior school has been a serious and uncreative place. Now there are changes, especially where secondary education is no longer selective. How have those changes come about?

Background

There have been two cycles of experimentation and development in the recent history of primary education. In the 1920s the experiment was mostly sparked off by individuals with their own schools: Susan Isaacs at the Malting House, A.S. Neill at Summerhill, Dora Russell at Beacon Hill. Their method of starting from the child and its motivations instead of imposing education, was given wide publicity in 1931 by an official report on primary schools, the Hadow report(1).

Hadow strongly recommended progressive practices. "We are of the opinion that the curriculum of the primary school is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be

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(1) The Primary School, H.M.S.O. 1931, and reprinted.

acquired and facts to be stored." But unfortunately for primary education, some of the radical edge of this theme was blunted. For alongside its plea for progressive methods Hadow argued for a practice that was bound to be inconsistent with it - streaming children by ability. In that, it did of course reflect its time. Contemporary British psychological opinion held strongly to the view that differences in intelligence between children made such division necessary.

Nevertheless the child-centred ideas were taken up at a key point in the cycle - in teacher training colleges. They have had two characteristics which made them effective diffusers of the Hadow ideas. In the first place, until 1947 they were training teachers exclusively for elementary education: thus they did not have to resolve within the single institution conflicts between child-centred primary and subject-centred secondary methods. Nor did they have much contact with the universities which would have been likely to stress content rather than method. This emphasis, though modified, has continued since the restructuring of teacher education after the war when universities institutes were given responsibility for approving college courses. Also since the war student-teachers have nearly all been young women going into teaching for a few years before raising families. The turnover has been enormous. But so has the opportunity for the introduction of ideas, even though students going into their first job start at the bottom of the school hierarchy.

Nevertheless it is the continuing relationship between the local education authorities and the schools which is more likely to have determined the extent to which primary schools have changed. After the war and in the 1950 s, schools throughout certain authorities were transformed. Bristol, Leicestershire, Cumberland, the West Riding of Yorkshire and Oxfordshire are some of the most notable. The Hertfordshire architect, Stirrat Johnson-Marshall, revolutionised primary school building with the development of the CLASP system. These local education authorities are to the 1960 s and 1970 s what Susan Isaacs and A.S. Neill were to the 1930 s and 1940s. Their approach has been similarly given impetus by another official report, the Plowden report; colleges of education are still feeding vast armies of girls into the primary schools.

But this time there are three other factors which are likely to make the child-centred schools the rule rather than the exception. First, is the Government decision that secondary education should no longer be selective; this is freeing the junior schools from the thrall of the 'eleven plus' in areas which had not already gone comprehensive. Secondly, there is a much greater awareness of the importance of the early years of schooling. Thirdly, Schools Council projects provide stimulus on a national scale.

Change in one local education authority

Primary schooling is widely recognised as the show piece of British education. The section that follows looks at the primary school achievement of one local education authority, Oxfordshire. This authority - with Bristol, Leicestershire and the West Riding of Yorkshire - led the way in making primary education notable, with a consistently high standard among its schools.

In Oxfordshire a school playground may seem conventional enough. Inside, the successful schools, whether they are in new buildings or old, have broken with tradition. Gone are the dark blank corridors, the row of desks, the children grouped by ability, all doing the same thing at the same time. The schools are now light, colourful and very obviously alive. You are likely to see a fair number of children moving between classrooms. In old schools some of the walls between rooms have been knocked through and the corridors used too. In some of the new schools the corridors have almost become the school - expanded and with activity bays leading off them. Each base or class is largely self sufficient. In infant classes you see dressing up corners, climbing frames, a cookery corner, sand. In the junior classes there is likely to be a shop. All from five through to eleven have their areas for maths, for reading and for painting and some sort of construction, their plants and often their animals. They all have sets of objects for their number work, very often things the children have collected themselves: pebbles, chestnuts and buttons as well as rods and blocks and manufactured equipment. They all have their carpeted reading corners. The old sets of textbooks have been replaced. Instead there will be a mixture of stories and books (chosen by the teachers) that children can use for reference. These may cover anything from spaceships to old English churches. They are often expensive and nearly always well looked after. It is the walls rather than the layout of the room which give you some clue to the children's ages. For the rooms are decorated with the children's work: in number, writing, project work. Often in the shared areas like the school hall there is a display: some twigs, a pheasant's feather, some tie and dye textiles, a piece of pottery which the teachers use to stimulate childrens' thought, and which acts as a starting point for their enquiry and learning. The approach seems consistently to bring about higher standards in the basic skills, particularly reading. The children clearly benefit from the greater relevance of the teaching approach to their developmental stage and from the extent to which learning is recognised as individual.

Strikingly, the freedom of such schools very often appears to be combined with a great degree of self-discipline, even among children of five and six. The children nearly all work individually or in twos and threes from the moment they reach school in the morning. They go to the teacher when they want help or possibly to another adult: a local mother attached to the class as an infant helper, or a college of education student on teaching practice. But, where the school works well, one notices over a day a teacher keeping quite a check on what goes on: steering children who have spent the morning dressing up and playing at doctors and nurses into writing: talking to a child who has been on his own for a period, absorbed in making a model; as well as dealing with the children perpetually demanding her attention. She brings the children together a certain amount: for a story at the end of the morning; or if there is something she thinks several are confused about which might be aided by general discussion; or maybe she starts them off on something new, such as classroom mural, by talking together.

The organisation of the class varies with the teacher and the school. Some group their classes by age; others take a span - in one school covering four years. In a few and decreasing number of schools the children are grouped by ability. In most, teachers cope effectively with a span ranging from very bright to educationally subnormal. The measure of the school's achievement is the high degree of involvement

by the children, and the astonishing achievement in some of their work: creative writing, painting, ingenious constructions.

The changes have been evolving over a period since the war, when A.R. Chorlton was appointed director of education. The overwhelming impression just after the war was of dinginess and isolation. Very often a school's sole teacher would have lived out her life in the same place, starting as a pupil, going on to pupil teacher, and finally taking charge. Even in 1945 the schools were just as they were when built in the 1890 s, down to coke stoves and water from a pump. It was not a difficult job to analyse what should be done to improve the physical shape of the schools, and break down the professional isolation and stagnation among teachers. It was a different matter to act especially at a time when all authorities were under immediate pressure to plan for universal secondary education. Oxfordshire was among a small number of authorities which provided the conditions to enable primary schools to change, so that by 1969 three-quarters of the schools were in buildings that had either been constructed since the war or had been greatly extended.

But an authority seldom tries to exert such direct control over what happens in a classroom. Oxfordshire played the classic role of forward-looking English authorities: encouraging but not directing.

The history of the change has been to some extent a history of the people involved and has been aided by the fact that the key figures were together for nearly 20 years. But nevertheless the change has happened within a well-defined institutional structure, with the director of education supported by the elected members of the authority on the education committee and given professional assistance by a team of advisers. Advisers are usually promoted teachers and their job is to go round schools making suggestions and helping with difficulties: there is no question of their being able to instruct. When the head and the adviser are working together, they are in primary schools an almost irresistable combination. The advisers in Oxfordshire, working with heads have been able to effect numerous schemes to give schools greater support. Some of the two and three class schools in an area are linked. Some share minibuses so that the children may share in activities or a teacher with a special skill at one school may go into the other schools in the group as well. Schools in particular difficulties may be helped by a task force of advisory seconded teachers.

The first adviser after the war, Edith Moorhouse, provided a common link for these isolated schools. She could advise as building money came up and heads retired, where to expand, where to contract. The adviser was able to bring teachers together out of school: courses were a revolutionary concept in the 1940 s. As their confidence built up, together the advisers and the heads embarked on development: they started to "unstream", to "family group", to introduce an "integrated day". Gradually the advisory structure was strengthened by the appointment of regional advisers. Their responsibilities run from nursery school through to secondary, enabling them to produce a different perspective for development.

In Oxfordshire from the mid-1950 s, the HMI (Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools) was also actively involved. An HMI, a link man between the authority and the central government department, has many

more schools to see than a local adviser. His development role is very much what he makes of it. Oxfordshire was fortunate to have Robin Tanner, an artistic and sensitive man who was very much in sympathy with any attempt to cut down on dinginess. He was also a person who insisted on high quality, especially in encouraging children's response to their environment. His enthusiasm affected teachers and local authority officials. Many of the schools still show traces of his influence in their italic writing and their attention to display.

The four key forces in Oxfordshire - the director of education, the primary adviser, the HMI and the heads - were aided by others, such as the colleges of education. Not only do schools take in students on teaching practice, some of the teachers lecture in colleges (some are promoted to their staffs). Now teachers' centres provide a new base for development, where all those interested can come together.

But while change may be initiated fairly systematically, the attempts to evaluate and then diffuse the practice are generally much more idiosyncratic, depending largely on the professional judgements of those involved. HMIs are traditionally inspectors. In Oxfordshire's case the HMI was too deeply involved to be objective. The Plowden committee's support of the Oxfordshire approach was a form of evaluation. But it is typical of the English approach that there has been nothing more external. Evaluation on the whole tends to be a matter between the teachers, advisers and administrators concerned. Their measure of success tends to be how far any stimulus or expertise can be shared in order to provide a spring for the next round of development.

Secondary Reorganisation

In common with many countries, England is changing its pattern of secondary schooling, by abolishing the selection tests by which the bright go to the grammar schools (in a few areas, the next brightest go to central or technical schools) and the rest are dismissed to the secondary modern schools. The schools are being replaced by comprehensive schools whose common characteristic is that they do not select their entry. They aim to take all the children - and in theory cover the entire ability range.

Looked at as a national exercise in innovation, the reorganisation of secondary education is more notable for the protracted hope behind it than for systematic planning. Looked at locally - where it all began - there are instances of creative development and long term planning, although subject to delay and confusion when central government and local education authorities have had different objectives. The effectiveness of the change as far as the schools are concerned is always dependent on teachers' attitudes. Belatedly, organisational change is stimulating in curriculum and methods.

Background

The original impetus for comprehensive schools grew out of the pressure for universal secondary education, which dated from the beginning of the century. But the case for a common secondary school made little headway for a number of years. A series of influential official reports from the Consultative Committee (Hadow, 1926 (1), the Spens

(1) The Education of the Adolescent - not to be confused with The Primary School, see footnote (1) on page 29.

report, 1938; the Norwood report, 1944) all upheld the case for selective education, i.e. that innate differences in intelligence required children to be differentiated according to ability. This view was pressed with much firmness by the Norwood report, which claimed that the education system had "thrown up" three "rough groupings" of children with different types of mind. Contemporary cynics lost no time in pointing out that this seemed to be the Almighty benevolently creating three types of children in just the proportions which would gratify educational administrators. And the psychologists, such as Sir Cyril Burt, whose work was supposedly being drawn on to support the Norwood committee's conclusions, claimed that the committee had produced a theory as outdated as phrenology.

Then came the 1944 Education Act with its commitment to secondary education for all. Claims had already been made for common secondary schooling as a counter to social divisiveness; the Norwood report was thoroughly criticised. Even so, the government (a coalition one) was prepared to do no more than be ambiguous about the form of secondary schooling. In the end all the act said was that "children shall be educated according to their age, ability, and aptitude." There was no mention of types of school.

How then has the move to comprehensive education worked out? Let us look at each of the main bodies involved - central government, local education authorities, schools and Schools Council.

Central government

Under the 1944 Act (1), local education authorities had to get government approval for development plans for secondary education plans. And the government's advice was precise. It claimed that it was "inevitable" in the light of different abilities, and the existing layout of schools, that authorities should think in terms of three types of secondary school: grammar, technical and modern.

Yet the government at the time (1945-1951) was Labour. Given that comprehensive education had been a lively political issue in the 1930s and 1940s, it now seemed surprising that a Labour government was not more enthusiastic about the issue. It was prepared to approve comprehensive or multilateral (i.e. all types of education separately organised) schools only if they would take at least 1,600 pupils: large enough to contain an adequate share of top as well as middle and lower ability children. It approved in principle long-term plans for large purpose-built comprehensives (e.g. London and Coventry). It rejected plans for immediate transformation to a comprehensive system (e.g. Middlesex) on the base of existing buildings. It accepted a number of schemes for individual comprehensives especially after 1947 (e.g. in Westmoreland and in the West Riding of Yorkshire). These included some interim comprehensives merging the second-best selective schools (central schools) with modern schools (e.g. in London).

Then from 1951-1964 a Conservative government was in control. It proclaimed itself willing to allow limited experiments and then proceeded to draw the limits quite tight. Thus a scheme for a London purpose-built comprehensive which would have involved incorporating a grammar school was rejected at the last moment (on the grounds that the public wereagainst it since there had been protest marches). In

1955 a new minister condemed the "assassination" - incorporation - of grammar schools. In 1958 the Conservatives issued a policy statement(1) in view of the great demand for academic grammar-type education. This recognised that the pool of ability was much larger than previously supposed. It argued not for comprehensive schools but for a policy of overlap - advanced courses in the secondary modern schools. As more and more authorities, convinced of the inadequacies of selection, produced schemes for comprehensive schools the government built up a convention: schools could be approved where they did not threaten existing (grammar) schools. In practice this meant comprehensives were established on new housing estates and in rural areas. Nevertheless, over 160 comprehensives had been established by the end of the Conservative government's period of office. More crucial, the then Conservative minister (Edward Boyle) stated in 1962 that a Conservative government would not expect local education authorities to build any more grammar schools. Boyle also helped to convince his government that the minimum school leaving age should be raised to 16, aided by a much quoted statement of his in the foreword to the Newsom report that "all children should have an equal chance of acquiring intelligence and of developing their talents and abilities to the full." Secondary education for all thus moved further towards realisation than might have been expected under a Conservative government.

Then the Labour government came to power in 1964 with a commitment to make secondary education comprehensive. Within a couple of months the Secretary of State for Education (Michael Stewart) had justified this as in the national interest, arguing that the selection procedures were inefficient, and that the errors made at eleven could not be adequately remedied later and that it was all but impossible to find an appropriate place for the secondary modern in a selective system. "It will do a great evil to our country if the gap in understanding between the more and the less intellectual is allowed to widen, and one of the great merits of the comprehensive is that it can promote this mutual understanding."

The government acted as though it was in exactly the same position in 1964 as it had been in 1947 when it requested development plans for secondary reorganisation, largely to conform with its own guidance. The 1964 government's line that it was not dictating was fortuitiously aided by the fact that no special funds were allocated to reorganisation. The government also allowed a wide degree of choice within fairly vague objectives.

The circular took its objectives from a Parliamentary motion:

> "That this House, conscious of the need to raise educational standards at all levels, and regretting that the realisation of this objective is impeded by the separation of children into different types of secondary schools, noted with approval the efforts of local authorities to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines which will preserve all that is valuable in grammar school education for those children who now receive it and make it available to more children; recognises that the

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(1) Secondary Education for All, H.M.S.O., 1958.

"method and timing of such reorganisation should vary to meet local needs; and believes that the time is now ripe for a declaration of national policy."

Local education authorities were not restricted, they had a choice of any of the current variants of comprehensive organisation - 11 to 18 schools, two-tier schools (11 to 13 or 11 to 14 followed by 13 to 18 or 14 to 18 schools) or sixth form colleges with transfer at 16. Experiments with middle schools straddling the primary-secondary school division at 11 would also be allowed (later on approval was given more freely). Authorities were even in the short term to be allowed to go for a form of organisation which merely postponed selection for a couple of years by allowing children to transfer at the age of 13 or 14 to a grammar type education if their parents wanted it (and were backed up by the teachers).

But the 1947 analogy does not hold. The government had to toughen its approach slightly one year later in a further circular (Department of Education circular 10/66) which stated that the Department would only approve secondary school building plans for comprehensive schemes. Again it was not fully effective; the circular carried only the force of recommendation, and a determined authority has been able to resist (as Surrey did) to the point where the government had to give in or see children without a school place.

So the Labour government belatedly decided it ought to legislate. It had meanwhile set back reorganisation badly by postponing the raising of the school leaving age and with it £100 million worth of building programmes which many authorities were using to aid reorganisation. Early in 1970, near the end of its life, the government introduced a bill to give the force of law to the 1965 circular.

But the legislation, which came to nothing because parliamentary time was too short, would anyway have been a blunt instrument. It might have been used against the few recalcitrant local education authorities, but it could not tackle the real hold-ups: the individual schools that LEAs would not try and draw into the scheme or the schools themselves which were able to stand out against reorganisation (such as the voluntary grammar schools which are maintained by the State but have a majority of independent governors) or the direct grant schools which the government had commissioned advice on from the Public Schools Commission.

Nevertheless the threat of legislation had been enough to break the political consensus on education. The Conservatives, who won the 1970 general election came to power promising to "end compulsion" in education. One of the new Secretary of State's first actions was to send out a circular (Department of Education circular 10/70) withdrawing the Labour circular and suggesting henceforward "educational considerations in general, local needs and wishes in particular and the wise use of resources to be the main principles determining the local pattern."

What happened since goes to show that there is no very clear correlation between government action and local authority reaction. The Labour circular, which officials now say was sent out with their fingers crossed, was in fact taken up by most authorities (partly

thanks to those same officials' coaxing.) Over 26 per cent of children were in comprehensives by 1970 and, but for postponing the raising of the school leaving age, the figure would have been much higher. And as authorities have gradually managed to rebuild some of their secondary schools they are continuing to plan them as comprehensives. Since the Conservative government came in, even some of the "rebel" authorities have submitted plans. The momentum for change is even more firmly in local hands since the Conservatives came into office.

Local education authorities

As with the central government, local education authorities immediately after the war do not appear to have made their educational plans on particularly political grounds. Thus, in London, the Conservative opposition agreed to the experiments the Labour-controlled council put forward. The Conservatives in Coventry created no trouble. One of the earliest comprehensive schemes in the country was proposed by a Conservative authority: the West Riding of Yorkshire. Equally there were many Labour controlled authorities, particularly in the north of England and the midlands which were totally opposed to any scheme which threatened the grammar school: the grammar school had, after all, through the scholarship system given these working class Labour councillors their chance. They saw merit, not money, as the biggest gateway to opportunity. The Leicestershire proposals in 1957 came from a Conservative authority. Most of the comprehensive proposals during the 1950s did however come from Labour councils.

Then in 1960 Labour took control of the majority of local councils and the Labour party headquarters advised its councils to introduce comprehensives or at least modify the harshness of the selection system. The advice was secret but the results were noticeable. Between 1961 and 1964 a quarter of the country's local education authorities modified their selection system and among those making plans for comprehensives were some of the most important in the country, including Manchester and Liverpool. Despite the pace of reorganisation, the introduction of comprehensive schools - or rather the retention of grammar schools - is still a lively local issue.

London

London (the old London County Council and now the Inner London Education Authority) in 1945 looked to American experience when planning its secondary education. It argued that the old selective system was an accident of history. Comprehensive schools it suggested would provide "flexibility of organisation, variety of choice of the subjects which are the vehicles of education and superior general amenities." It therefore proposed the development of over 100 comprehensive schools. It was not a totally comprehensive pattern: the Council at that time had no power to make grants to the voluntary schools (which happened to be grammar schools). It therefore planned to build its own schools nearby to take the rest of the ability range: these were known as "county complements".

Since even with immediate building approval none of the new comprehensives would be ready until the early 1950s, it also proposed that interim comprehensives be formed from central and secondary modern schools. The first purpose-built comprehensive with its six science

laboratories, nine housecraft centres, five gymnasia and 16 acres of playing fields was opened in 1954 under a cloud; at the last moment the government, by then Conservative, refused to allow the incorporation of a grammar school. Nevertheless, the first comprehensives were an immediate success, aided by their buildings, their novelty and a bulge in the London school population.

Numbers grew over the decade. By the time the Labour government circular was sent out, over 50 per cent of London secondary school children were in comprehensives (including the "county complements": the distinction was abandoned in the 1950s). All took the full age range: 11 to 18. Most were large. Most had evolved from secondary modern schools. By then London included schools with varied organisations: house systems, form systems, highly streamed, some with mixed ability groups for certain activities. In response to the circular, the Labour-held council submitted a plan for 113 comprehensives by 1970, leaving 46 grammar schools, 13 modern schools and one technical school. But London shelved the problem of the voluntary aided grammar school which fiercely opposed any connection with a comprehensive system. This grammar-comprehensive divide became more overt when the Conservatives won control of the council in 1967 and re-submitted the plan, having taken out most schemes which involved the incorporation of grammar schools. In 1970 therefore reorganisation had not gone as far as it would have done under Labour. There were only 85 comprehensives, and still 67 grammar schools, 40 "evolving" comprehensives, 28 modern and 3 technical schools. Under their plan, 128 comprehensives, 41 grammar, 12 "evolving" comprehensives and 9 modern schools are scheduled to exist in 1975. Over 15 per cent of London children are still in grammar schools, a number intended to drop to 10 per cent by 1975. This number includes, it must be supposed, a very large proportion of top ability children (figures are **not released**).

The authority operates a complicated sharing scheme, known as banding, to try and ensure that the comprehensives get a fair share of those who apply to them. Children are tested anonymously at the age of 10 and a formula is worked out to show (with some area variations) the share that secondary schools are entitled to accept. Over 85 per cent get their first choice, over 95 per cent their second choice. But only a handful of comprehensives get a full share of top ability children: most of whom are still in nearby grammar schools.

London's success (in common with many big cities) therefore has to be measured in modified terms. Many of the schools are now in modern buildings (though many have shared sites). They have a wide range of facilities (London did not push many of its extra resources into primary schools in the 1950s and early 1960s). Many of the comprehensives have genuinely opened up opportunities - or at least attracted their consumers. Over half the London children staying on for a sixth year over the school leaving age are children who are not attempting the conventional sixth year advanced work. But the system is still vitiated by selection.

Bristol

Bristol has many totally non-selective areas. There was some great forethought on the part of the Chairman of the Education Committee and the Chief Education Officer immediately after the war when rebuilding

was planned. Bristol, badly bombed, decided to redevelop with large housing estates on the outskirts of the city. The education committee reserved large (50 acres) sites in the middle of each estate, feeling that it was difficult to predict a pattern of secondary education to last the lifetime of those houses. It needed flexibility.

Bristol had in 1946 thought of two types of school - academic and vocational - but by 1951 modified its earlier proposals to argue that all secondary school resources for each area should be concentrated in one place. The great period of school building was during the 1950's while Labour held the council. Schools which were initially planned to serve the neighbourhood were all scheduled to become comprehensive schools of six or nine form entry (i.e. 1,000 to 1,500 pupils). They were mostly started as bilateral: schools had some unselected local children and some selected coming in through the eleven plus procedure.

Though Labour lost the council from 1960 to 1963, it came back pledged to remove the eleven plus. The outer areas with comprehensives were able to abolish selection straight away (parents who did not want their children to go to their local school can opt for another comprehensive school). The outer areas of Bristol are now truly neighbourhood schools - with the advantages and disadvantages. But in the centre of Bristol are a number of academically highly selective direct grant schools and some secondary modern schools which cannot easily be brought in with the comprehensive system. One-third of its secondary schools are not comprehensive.

The West Riding of Yorkshire

The West Riding is a pioneer with a number of forms of comprehensive schooling and a long history of no eleven plus (it used teachers' assessments from 1955). Its comprehensives date from 1946, its first purpose-built one from 1956. The authority had been highly dubious about the Hadow report and downright sceptical about the Norwood report. It took advice from psychologists on the impossibility of selecting children by ability. "We must not allocate children blindly", the education committee said at the time. Instead "we must by experiment discover the needs of children of eleven plus and differentiate our school gradually according to our discoveries". Its first comprehensive was approved by a Conservative authority. Its progress to comprehensive organisation has been complicated by its constitution; it is one of the country's largest authorities (population of over two million compared with London's 800,000). It devolves a lot of planning to divisional executives. They have varied in their enthusiasm. There are now different plans for different areas including 18 schools and a kind of sixth form college, a "mushroom" sixth form on the "stalk" of a grammar school which takes in pupils from the local secondary moderns who want extended courses. The college is physically almost separate from the grammar school but can share staff and resources. It also leaves the options open if there is pressure on the secondary moderns to develop their own sixth form. Since 1962 the West Riding has been working towards a middle school scheme for many of its areas. (The age span runs from 5 to 9, 9 to 13, 13 to 18).

Its approach is characteristic of the way it has innovated. Its chief education officer, one of the most famous in the country, Sir Alec Clegg, uses his teachers. A number were consulted about various

schemes for comprehensives and asked what they felt about the age of selection. They favoured changes in the transfer age for secondary selection to 13 and also breaking the barriers between primary and secondary. The middle school scheme is having a number of useful consequences. Schools are forced to co-operate over curriculum planning: the middle schools introduce subjects which may be unfamiliar in the primary school. They have virtually all had to learn how to teach French for example, and this has been done by groups of teachers from the secondary schools and a country adviser. It has brought the teachers - even in the West Riding where there is a very strong tradition of in-service training - unusually close together, breaking down the isolation between types of school.

Leicestershire

Many of the schemes have one great disadvantage: they do not abolish selection over an entire area, often because the existence of voluntary and grammar schools puts it out of the authority's control. London illustrates the predicament. Many authorities have put their priorities, instead, on abolishing selection for individual schools. Leicestershire has worked the other way round and, with one of the best planned schemes of all, became in 1969 the first county in England to abolish selection totally.

After the war the authority had accepted the Hadow arguments for a system of grammar, technical and modern schools. It shared in the widespread dislike of "monster" comprehensive schools. But during the 1950 s its director, Stuart Mason, grew uneasy about the errors in selection, about parents' opposition to the eleven plus and the fact that selection was ruining the junior schools and even some infant schools, by forcing children to learn by rote. Leicestershire was Conservative-held but the chairman and committee were in favour of Mason's plan for a new comprehensive experiment. In 1957 the authority proposed a "two-tier" scheme: that all children should go to the same "high" school at 11 and then all parents who wanted to could transfer their children to an "upper" school at the age of 14, provided they kept them there till 16 at least. The scheme was a success locally, the central (Conservative) government went out of its way to bless it. It was gradually extended to other areas.

The primary schools benefited immediately (and became famous). The high schools enjoyed the full range of pupils, graduate staff and better equipment than in their secondary modern days. Examination pressures were confined to the upper schools though these schools have gradually become more comprehensive. And initially the schools remained small - able to use the existing buildings though the upper schools have gradually been enlarged to take 1,000 to 1,200 pupils.

The chief problem of the scheme has been in the high schools - left with the children who did not transfer at the age of 14, often a demoralising element. The local education authority therefore introduced automatic transfer in each area as soon as 80 per cent transferred voluntarily. The high schools may be strengthened further in the future. The authority is now planning to make them four-year schools, taking pupils from the age of 10. This is to be tried in the first areas in 1970.

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The Leicestershire scheme seems to some extent to have been a victim of politics. Two-tier schemes, which looked as if they would be very popular with authorities making plans after the government's circular in 1965, were attacked by the political left for not being genuinely comprehensive. Parental choice or guided parental choice was seen (justifiably) as a form of selection: it was still the grammar-type middle class children who went on to the upper school.

It is too often forgotten that the Leicestershire scheme was built on the strengths of existing schools. A number of other authorities have disregarded the schools for the sake of a plan and have ended up with a much less comprehensive system.

Cumberland

The authorities mentioned so far have guided government policy. Cumberland is typical of many of the rest: it had not resisted the idea of comprehensive schools, given the opportunity for building, but it actually had few comprehensive schools when the government sent out its circular. For those authorities the circular has been basically a push to an inevitable process. Cumberland is however among the authorities which have taken this policy forward with great care in a difficult situation. It is a rural area, much of it remote and much of it with a static or declining population.

Cumberland, under its director, Gordon Bessey, had in the 1950s gone much further than many authorities to build up its secondary modern schools. The ones which had particularly strong sides - in art or domestic science for example - were encouraged to build up extended courses and take in children over 15 from other secondary moderns for their 'speciality'.

When there was the opportunity, comprehensive schools were set up. One example shows the very positive conception of the authority. A new school was needed in 1964 for an atomic energy station. It could have been built in the station and drawn predominantly on the middle class research workers. In fact it was sited at a point where it also could draw on the farms and iron and coal mining communities and provide for adults as well as children. It is a flourishing community centre too, housing local clubs as well as classes for adults (this is still fairly rare in England).

A two-tier scheme is being adopted for many of the other areas in the country. Transfer at 13 (as opposed to 14 in Leicestershire) depends on "guided parental choice" for the normal grammar school curriculum. Thus the scheme is subject to the sort of criticism that were made of Leicestershire. But its flexibility should not be underestimated, as long as children are not deterred from transferring to the upper school. As pressure for transfer builds up and the teachers in the lower schools become experienced in teaching children over the whole ability range, the age of transfer can be raised. By starting in a limited way it builds on existing resources.

Others

Reorganisation has inspired a number of other schemes, linking schools and further education for example (in different ways in Devon

and Oxfordshire). Although most authorities have gone for 11 to 18 schools - the original conception - many of the more recent plans propose middle school schemes, two-tier and sixth form colleges. Several combine different schemes. That seems a measure of maturity and an opportunity to concentrate on what goes on inside the schools.

Schools: Organisation and Curriculum

Given the English context, the Department of Education in vetting plans is really concerned with two features only. Is the intake non-selective? Do schools provide a sufficient range of advanced courses to justify regarding them as more than secondary modern schools?

This may well be the limit of the local education authority's concern too. It is only very recently that an official report (on the direct grants schools(1))argues that local education authorities should be more positive. It suggests ten criteria for schemes; for example that they should ensure that children of all abilities are educated in such a way as to develop their talents to the highest possible degree: that children are not segregated before the statutory school leaving age into separate schools; that the schools do provide opportunities to go on to further or higher education; that schools are not placed in a hierarchy of esteem; that schools are not socially one-class establishments; that there is close collaboration over curriculum and methods between schools in tied arrangements.

Had local authorities come to terms with those arguments publicly, it would probably have been a great boost for flexible methods in the secondary school at a much earlier stage. Local education authority action, limited or not, is the key. Once the authority decides to reorganise, the way is open for schools to decide how far they are going to relate - in the phrasing of the American educationalist, Professor John Goodlad - the function of the school to its form. In other words, once the structure of the school has been decided, how far will its curricula and organisational functions be consistent with it?

Nearly all the debate - about forms of grouping, streaming, the place of the gifted child and the slow learner, the extent to which there can be a common curriculum, overlap with further education - comes from the schools themselves(2) though it is conditioned by examination pressures (from the examination boards and the universities) and more recently by the Schools Council.

Significantly the Schools Council's involvement in secondary education was not stimulated by reorganisation. Worry about science programmes for bright children started curriculum reform for the secondary school. The government decision to raise the school leaving

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(1) Public Schools Commission, Second Report, H.M.S.O., 1970.

(2) The dialogue among innovating schools is effectively monitored in Forum, a journal edited by Professor Brian Simon. Simon is also co-author with David Rubinstein of The Evolution of the Comprehensive School, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969, on which this section draws.

age (RSLA) extended the Schools Council's involvement. The materials from some of the RSLA projects will undoubtedly stimulate many of the non-innovating schools into much more conscious concern about the implications of non-selective schooling. But it does take a long time.

Conclusion

To sum up: reorganisation has gone far enough to acquire its own momentum so that the change of government has not had any marked effect. But if you ask how soon reorganisation is going to change all children's experience of school, then the limitations are obvious. First, without special funds there is the lengthy period needed for the change. Second, there will not be a 100 per cent changeover to comprehensives without a government deciding to use a force which would change its relationship to local education authorities. Third, there is no institutional way of ensuring that changes in the organisation of schools stimulate a reassessment of curriculum and methods. But this is happening, because of the Schools Council and because more pupils stay voluntarily. This is typical. Change in English education relies very heavily on the individual professionals - administrators and head teachers - knowing how to draw the threads together.

PART IV

CONCLUSIONS

Does the experience of children in schools change and for the better? It is a focus which may get lost when there is much activity on curriculum development, educational technology or teacher education. But it is one good consequence, at least, of the decentralised English approach that much innovation involves schools right from its beginnings.

Of the examples in this report, curriculum projects arise from the dissatisfaction of teachers and pupils with the existing situation. The changes in primary education activities, an untimetabled day and varied forms of grouping, have grown directly out of individual schools' experiments. The changes in secondary education are probably much less effective just because they are initiated from higher up the system.

However it would be foolish to suggest that the English education system is particularly receptive to change. One barrier might be apparent to foreign readers. There is no clear chain of control or communication in the English system. A minister cannot snap his fingers, devise a policy and expect it to be implemented by the 163 local education authorities, 23,000 primary schools or 3,000 secondary schools. Nor at the other extreme is there any guarantee that a school which tries to innovate gets the necessary support.

Formally, control is exercised by the Secretary of State for Education and the Department of Education, with local education authorities below them and school governors down at the grass roots. Universities exercise some control over the education of teachers, and the churches exercise some control over some schools. But that control is mediated by a number of pressures of which the strongest are the degree of the teachers' professional interest and involvement, and the interests of local education authorities themselves as developers. Noticeable pressure can also be generated by students, parents, examination bodies, educational publishers and employers. The Department of Education itself generally occupies a relatively limited regulating role.

The system can be more accurately described as a net rather than a chain, a net traditionally kept at tension point by powerful pressure groups, the teachers and the local education authorities especially. Recently the Schools Council and the National Council for Educational Technology have been superimposed as development bodies. Their success depends on how far they can work through the various key groups.

Obviously not all in the net are developers. Individual local education authorities give the lie to the remarkably creative work of

such authorities as Bristol, Cambridgeshire, Cumberland, Devon, Leicestershire, Oxfordshire and Yorkshire West Riding. Individual teachers or local teachers' organisations can shut themselves in their classroom out of earshot of progressive ideas. The strategy for innovators is thus likely to take one of two forms. Either they try and involve all those in the net. Or they so alter the structure as to produce a chain for innovation.

In theory the central government's control could be far more effectively exercised through the HMIs, many of whom are regionally based. But HMIs have spent most of the last 50 years shaking off their purely inspectorial functions. Not surprisingly they are not keen to revive the ancient rivalries between central and local government that inspection would bring. They regard their development work as far more productive. And at present they would be too small a force - there are only 550 of them - to cover the country's schools.

In theory too, the Department of Education could go for an alternative. It could get local education authorities to show good reasons for not developing. This would leave intact the necessary and valuable development function of local education authorities. The department is neither physically nor psychologically equipped to do this. It was a major exercise getting in development plans after the 1944 education act. It has been an equally mammoth effort to get local education authorities to submit plans for secondary reorganisation.

The government has gone as far as it would be likely to go in its recent evidence to the Royal Commission on Local Government. It identifies the problem of many authorities as being too small to perform the functions expected of a forward looking unit of government. They have neither the budget nor the quality of staff for development work: they either do not run or run few in-service training courses, they are less likely to have an advisory staff with enough specialised experience to be useful. They are less likely to set up teachers' centres or experiment with school design.

Many authorities have themselves voluntarily made efforts to counteract the disadvantages of smallness. Most have gone into consortia for school building and equipment. A few (around Manchester, together with the university; and also three north-western counties) have joined together in curriculum development. Five local education authorities are working with Sussex University's Centre for Educational Technology. But the rationale of the building consortia has been essentially economic: local education authorities have foregone their development functions. It is significant that there are few examples of authorities working together in curriculum development or educational technology.

The Schools Council and the National Council for Educational Technology offer an alternative device. They do not alter the control of curriculum and development. They are essentially central servicing agencies which leave the local options open. They try to spread through the whole net. They operate in the belief that power and responsibility in education must be dispersed and that there should be a variety of ways of responding to change. The Schools Council is undoubtedly a powerful force for decentralisation and pluralism in English education, giving power to individuals by organising for them access to research

information which is only likely to be available centrally, and encouraging changes but not imposing them. It is a highly ingenious solution with an additional merit; it recruits into temporary service teachers, and sometimes administrators, who are committed to change, not just the stage armies of academics and educational politicians in the educational organisations.

The fruits of this work are just beginning to appear with the publication of materials of some of the early projects (and about a dozen more are scheduled for 1970-71) and with the attempts to modify examinations in response to new curriculum and social needs.

To some extent the success of the Schools Council is measured in the activities of teachers centres, the demand for related in-service training and the sales of materials. But evaluation of the new curriculum is only marginally more apparent than evaluation of the old. The Schools Council appropriately is backing a number of horses. It has given funds to a university team to evaluate Project Technology. It is helping to finance a Nuffield investigation of the effects of the science project in schools and industry. The National Foundation for Educational Research is evaluating the primary French project. But many teachers and some of the innovators feel that long-term evaluation takes too long to be useful, many local education authorities put its claim for funds low down on their list of priorities. Yet curriculum reform is becoming big business: it needs validating. And more information about the attitudes of teachers and pupils to innovation is urgently needed if new projects are not to start off from the same level of ignorance as the early developers inevitably faced.

In general terms the answers are known. Teachers convinced by the old methods are more effective than teachers unconvinced by the new. So the urgent problem for innovators must lie in preparing teachers for a new and usually less didactic role.

The Schools Council does a certain amount in key areas. Many of the most demanding of its projects have funds for in-service training which they use for, say, 100 teacher-trainers and teachers in especially influential positions. But in-service training is also in the hands of the HMIs, the local education authorities (who provide the bulk of it) and the universities and colleges of education. There are 500 bodies concerned. It is also on a comparatively small scale. Expenditure is only one-twentieth of what is spent on the initial training of teachers (just over £5 million annually compared with £100 million) and most of that goes on one-term and one-year courses for a mere 2,000 teachers. There is a more serious criticism of in-service training: that it is not tied in with what teachers need. A recent survey(1) shows that there was a great unmet demand for courses connected with innovation - on comprehensive schooling, on school organisation, on audio-visual aids and educational television and a surplus of courses on physical education and the initial teaching alphabet. Nor is there any attempt yet to co-ordinate the pattern of in-service training; although the Department of Education did, as a preliminary, announce at the end of 1969 that it would give special grants to certain university institutes of education to expand their activities.

It might be thought that the Schools Council would be the obvious co-ordinating body since it could ensure that the projects are put

(1) H.E.R. Townsend, Statistics of Education, Special Series 2, H.M.S.O. 1970.

across to teachers. But there is no enthusiasm for this among local education authorities who regard it as their job and some of whom feel that they already have to hand over funds to the Schools Council which otherwise they would be able to use for their own development. It looks as if the Department of Education will be encouraging the university institutes and areas training organisations to take a more active role. But there is still a case for the more systematic application of the projects' results to initial training. The colleges can be very effective agents of diffusion.

Will English innovation continue to be enlivened by a device of the Schools Council sort? Can it continue (to quote again one of its administrators, see page 8) "to boost professional self-confidence in a pluralistic setting?" Put another way, can it continue to operate without effecting any change in the control of education? As the scale of innovatory effort rises there may well be a temptation for local authorities singly or in groups to want development decisions pre-empted, where they involve investment on the scale of an educational television service or materials which cost far more than the standard text books.

And can school innovation continue to be linked so closely with the schools? There are signs that development work signals a one-way route out of schools to universities and colleges of education, administration and advisory work. A two-way mobility needs to be encouraged by the career and salary structures. For there is no doubt that the strength of English educatior has come from developing upwards. It should not lose the roots from which it has grown.